

Framework for Quality

Swedish approaches

This experience... "strengthen[ed] convictions: Quality will increase when we require more formal education as a minimum standard for "educare" [early childhood] professionals. A network of an ongoing encouragement and support has to be put in place for educare [early childhood]"

Study Program Team Member

William A. Foster said, "Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution" (n.d.). The evolution from part-day preschool services in a tiny mill town to a renowned international system has been guided by Sweden's national commitment to the belief that every child has the right to a quality preschool experience as the first step in lifelong learning.

- Children are not held responsible for the choices of their parents. All families are eligible for up to three hours of preschool activity for each child, at no charge.
- Sweden has a common framework, Laroplan (www.skolverket.se), to guide the provision of preschool services.
- Preschools are a part of the education system and consistently reflect developmentally appropriate practices.
- Play is an integral, valued and inextricable part of curriculum from preschool through high school. It is common to observe long, consecutive periods of uninterrupted play led by the children and facilitated by pre school staff.
- In 1902, six months of teacher education was required to be employed as a Swedish preschool teacher. Today the equivalent of a four year degree is required for lead teachers.

How might these ideas be translated to North Carolina?

- **Increase investments in early care and education to increase access to quality services.** Advocate for US adoption of the international Convention on the Rights of the Child (<http://www.unicef.org/crc/fulltext.htm>). At the state level, advocate for greater investments to increase access to quality care for children in all places and circumstances.
- **Adopt a common set of guidelines and standards.** Consider using one framework, such as the *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers* (www.ncpublicschools.org/success/downloads/foundations.pdf) to guide teacher preparation (credit and non-credit bearing) and all early care and education professional development activities regardless of setting.